



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

phyritic, and some of a chertose appearance. These silicious rocks lie between the shale of the western part and the limestone of Sychdin, and, running northward, form very abrupt and picturesque precipices about Melin Deirw, in the valley of Ceiriog. To the east of Nant Mawr the lime rocks appear regularly stratified, dipping eastwardly, under the sand-stone and local strata of Tref-y-clawdd; and forming generally an angle of about 30 degrees of the horizon. Many of the strata are of the species called *flummery* stone. One bed of this kind, of several feet depth, was observed to contain nodules, of several feet dimensions, of a spherical form, of the common species of limestone, imbedded in it. This latter stone exhibits occasionally marks of marine exuviae, which are never found in the other.

The ore called sulphat of zinc, or black jack, has been found, in small quantities, in the common, or splintery limestone of Sychdin; and calamine, the carbonate of zinc, in large quantities, has been procured for several years together, from the *flummery* limestone of the Moelydd rocks in the township of Trev-y-clawdd, in the adjoining parish of Oswestry.

IDRIS.

[To be continued.]

THE MISCELLANIST.—No. V.

THERE is something very lively in the following sketch of an excursion to the celebrated Abbey of Cymmer near Dolgeilau: and the writer has contrived to give it some picturesque touches well adapted to the occasion. But, if any should be of opinion, that he has availed himself too largely of the privilege of a painter in this respect, they should at the same time consider, that the contemplation of ancient ruins, of a certain description, seldom fails to produce, in a mind of sensibility, a peculiar cast of impressions, which communicate their tints to every surrounding object. Upon the same principle it is, that many circumstances, which ordinary minds regard with indifference, derive in others a degree of importance from the particular medium, through which they are viewed. It is this species of colouring, although in an extreme degree, that has acquired the name of the romantic: and, whatever may be its popular character, it is far more true to nature than is generally imagined.

The Editor feels it a duty to add, that he is indebted to the

Writer of the "Cambrian Sketches," announced in the last Number, for this interesting "Visit," and which, he understands, is destined to form a part of his projected work.

* * *

A VISIT TO VANNER.

On the banks of the Mawddach, in Merionethshire, about a mile before that river has its junction with the Wmion and becomes navigable, are situated the monastic ruins of Cymmer, or, as it is more usually called, Vanner Abbey. The spot is secluded and beautiful; bounded on all sides by high and chiefly well-wooded hills, and concealed from the eye of man, until close to it, by venerable and majestic forest trees—

" ————— whose sober shade

Lets fall a serious gloom upon the mind,

Which checks, but not appals. Such are the haunts

Religion seeks—a meek and humble maid,

Whose tender eye bears not the blaze of day."

The ruins consist of what I should conceive to be the aisle of the church, the walls of which, the only part now remaining, are plenteously covered with ivy and other creeping plants. The refectory, I should however mention, is still standing, and is converted into a farm house; but, as it is detached from the main building, and has nothing very peculiar in its appearance, it can scarcely be accounted part of the ruins.

Cymmer Abbey was founded at the close of the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth century, by Meredudd and Gruffydd, sons of Cynan ab Owain Gwynedd, Prince of North Wales, and dedicated to the Mother of Jesus. Soon after its foundation it became, by the powerful patronage of its royal founders, very flourishing, and the monks obtained a charter, in 1209, from Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, which invested them with great power in those parts. Pennant and other writers on Welsh historical subjects give a detailed account of this abbey, and to his "Tour in North Wales" I must refer the reader for such information as he desires respecting it, merely observing, that, at the dissolution of monasteries by Henry VIII. it was valued at between 50 and 60 pounds; but the only charge on it, in 1553, was 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* paid to Lewis ab Thomas, supposed to have been the last abbot. Elizabeth, however, five-and-twenty years afterwards, granted it to her greedy and overbearing favourite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. It is now the property of the Vaughans of Hengwrt. The last time I was in Wales I had a great desire to visit these

ruins, not from any particular beauty attached to them, as specimens of architecture, but from a sensation of delight I always experience in viewing any of the ruins of our ancient buildings, to which historical record or tradition has imparted any interest. The mind is always pleasingly, and perhaps usefully, employed in contemplating fallen or decaying grandeur, and I must acknowledge, for my own part, that my visit to Vanner afforded me a pleasure I have not yet forgotten, and never shall forget.

It was in autumn last that I spent a short time on a visit in the neighbourhood of Dolgellau—"the modern capital of the wild county of Merioneth;" and one Sunday evening it was proposed to me by a very worthy young friend of mine, Mr. * * *, to visit Vanner—I cheerfully acquiesced in the proposal, and after tea we repaired thither—my friend, another young gentleman, and myself. The day had been rather stormy, and the heavens still looked grim and cloudy, although the rain had ceased. However, as Vanner is but a short two miles from Dolgellau, we did not heed the weather, and off we went. We took the nearer path, to the right of the regular road, passing through the woods of Hengwrt, the seat of Griffith Howel Vaughan, Esq., where, by the way, there is a valuable library of Welsh literature, both in print and manuscript *. We stopped to look at the house, which is an old square building, situated on rising ground, a little above the Barmouth road, on the right, and surrounded by some very valuable timber. It is at present uninhabited, its worthy and wealthy proprietor, Sir Robert Vaughan's brother, residing on his estate of Rug, near Corwen; but it is in admirable order; and I was informed, that the old walls of Hengwrt have echoed ere now to many a gleeful shout and merry revel. By the time we reached the abbey the summits of the surrounding hills were wrapped in the gloom of twilight, and the evening smoke of the neighbouring little hamlet of Llanelltyd arose in spiry volumes to the clouds, the wind, which had been high during the day, having totally subsided. We entered the precincts of the once far-famed Vanner, and the gloomy silence and solitude of the scene cast an awe over my mind, which I did not attempt either to repress or conceal. It was the Sabbath evening, and the busy noise of labour, and indeed of nature itself was hushed into tranquillity. At first not a sound was

* This library is now at Rug, another family estate, belonging to Mr. Vaughan, in the same county.—ED.

audible to disturb the solemn stillness, which surrounded us, save the gentle rippling of the river, as it made its way over its rocky and uneven bed; but ere long the wind began to rise, and murmured plaintively among the foliage of the trees: anon a bat would whir by us and nestle in the ivy, which covers the ruins. It was momentarily getting darker, and the ivied walls of the abbey cast a deeper shade on the area between them. The wind, too, increased, and at length howled mournfully around us; a drop or two of rain fell, and we had the comfortable prospect of being caught in a tempest. We prepared, therefore, to bend our course homewards, and were just about to leave the abbey, when the melancholy hooting of that most lugubrious of all birds, the owl, apparently just above us, startled us all, and reminded me of a passage in Blair's "Grave," which, with a trifling alteration, will be found somewhat applicable to our situation at Vanner.

The wind is up; hark! how it howls! Methinks,

Till now, I never heard a sound so dreary:—

————— night's foul bird,

Rook'd in the ruin, screams loud; the gloomy aisles,

Black-plaster'd and hung round with wreaths of ivy,

————— send back the sounds,

Laden with heavier airs, from the low vaults—

The mansions of the dead. —————

Again the screech-owl shrieks! ungracious sound!

I'll hear no more!—It makes one's blood run chill!

I may probably incur an imputation of cowardice from many by the declaration I am about to make, but positively the "ungracious sound" of "night's foul bird" caused my nerves to thrill most fearfully, and inspired me with a hearty wish to be gone. It seemed to me the scream of a demon, breaking loudly and dissonantly on the sacred stillness which invested us, and exulting in the departure of the intruders on its solitude. My companions, however, thought otherwise, and seemed to hail the sound as the greeting of old acquaintance, and one of them replied in a tone so similar to its own, that I absolutely started back some paces, supposing the bird at my elbow. The owl again hooted forth its *to-whit-to-whoo*, and a kind of conversation (unintelligible, however, to both parties) was carried on between it and my companions, which lasted till we gained the extremity of Hengwrt wood, the bird following us the whole way.

and sometimes flying round our head, almost within reach of our arms. If any of the simple natives heard the sounds we made, they would undoubtedly have drawn some melancholy presage from them. Soon after we left the woods the rain fell heavily, and we ran for shelter into a hut on the road-side, the inmates of which were engaged in the devotional exercises of the evening, and listening attentively to an elderly man, who was reading the Bible—

“ The huge clasp'd Bible, which had been his father's.”

There was a numerous congregation for so small a place, some twelve or fourteen, men, women, and children. This was a soothing and happy sight, and we remained till their vespers were concluded, when, the rain having ceased, we resumed our walk. As we entered the town, my friend offered to conduct me to the Town Hall, where the children of the Sunday School* were assembled to sing hymns, the usual, indeed the constant, mode of closing the Sabbath at Dolgellau. I accepted the offer with great pleasure, and we soon arrived at the Hall, where we found many of the respectable inhabitants gathered together. The singing had already commenced, and the singers were performing, with much sweetness and simplicity, the evening hymn. They finished this and several others, some in Welsh and some in English, and then, with their auditors, departed to their rest. It is needless for me to expatiate on this admirable and rational mode of terminating the duties of the Sabbath-day. Nothing, I should conceive, can be more purely and completely gratifying than to contemplate youthful piety in the act of lifting up its voice in adoration and gratitude to its Creator. What a contrast this, to the sickening depravity of the metropolis, and what a testimony of the assiduity and careful love of the Pastor of Dolgellau! Can any thing speak more forcibly in praise of his attention towards his flock—of his duty towards his God? I never spent an evening so happily and so worthily.

MERVINIUS.

In the sixth Number (p. 210) there appeared a short biographical notice, by P. B. W., of Davydd Llwyd ab Llewelyn. The

* The Sunday School was instituted some years ago by, I believe, the present worthy and highly esteemed Rector, Mr. Hughes. At all events, I am informed that he was chiefly instrumental in effecting its establishment. The young ladies, his daughters, now employ much of their time in instructing the poor children of the lower orders in the rudiments of useful knowledge. Is not this benevolence—pure unadulterated benevolence?—M.